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Paul Fleming

Paul Fleming was born on December 12, 1880 in Pyalong, the ninth of twelve children born to William and Matilda Fleming (nee Smith). William was a Scottish immigrant and Matilda was the daughter of convicts. William had selected land at Glenaroua in 1859 and later extended his holding to include the property known as "Braeside".

Paul enlisted in Melbourne on February 14, 1916. He gave his address as High Camp via Kilmore, his occupation as farmer, and his age as 34 years and 2 months, even though his age was actually over 35. Paul's next of kin was given as his mother Matilda, his father William having died in 1902. Matilda had continued to run the farm together with four of her children, including Paul. Paul enlisted as a private in the 19th Reinforcements, 4th Light Horse, No 2831 at the same time as the enlistment of two other men from Glenaroua - Lachlan McLean and William Fleming (no relation to Paul).

The Kilmore Advertiser of March 25, 1916, carried an article entitled "Soldiers' Farewell at Glenaroua", describing a send off for the three young men, where they were each presented with a wrist watch and lauded as "worthy sons of the Empire" who had all been "born and reared in the district."

Paul embarked from Australia on July 28, 1916 on board HMAT Themistocles bound for Larkhill, England. Lachlan McLean, who was also in the 4th Light Horse, had already departed for Egypt on July 25, 1916. Paul arrived in England on September 11, 1916 and was transferred to the 2nd Australian Field Artillery Brigade and sent to fight in France and Belgium. On December 29, 1917, he was posted to the 102nd Howitzer Battery which was attached to the 2nd Field Artillery Brigade. On March 15, 1918, he was promoted to Driver.

Many soldiers became ill from the hardships of trench warfare and from disease - Paul caught mumps in October 1917 and in April 1918, he developed acute nephritis, a kidney problem, and had several stays in hospital. On July 2, 1918, Paul was sent back to Australia on the hospital ship Kanowna, being officially discharged in Melbourne on October 31, 1918. His Certificate of Discharge states: " He is discharged in consequence of being medically unfit not due to misconduct".

The Kilmore Free Press of November 7, 1918, contained an article on the "postponed welcome home to Pte P. Fleming" at Glenaroua on October 29, where Paul was presented with an inscribed gold medal and a cheque for £25, in the hope that "the latter would be expended in a well-earned rest to recuperate his health and regain his strength."

Paul was awarded the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, and was listed on the Honour Roll at Glenaroua State School.

Paul went home to "Braeside" and in 1919 married Margaret McLean, known as Maggie, the sister of Harold and Lachlan McLean. They settled in Moonee Ponds, where Paul worked as a labourer but in 1921 they moved back to Glenaroua and bought a property called "Cranley". Paul and Maggie had five children and eventually retired to a house in Kilmore, where Paul died in November 1970, in his 90th year.

